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River Murray Flood Community Newsletter

Issue 4: Wednesday, 15 March 2023

Image: Grant Schwartzkopff



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Message from the Community Recovery Coordinator

Welcome to the latest edition of the River Murray Flood Community Newsletter. We've had a busy week on the ground with increased kerbside flood-waste collections in select areas, the delivery of portaloos and dewatering pumps in key locations and power re-connections steadily taking place where safe to do so.

Community meetings were held last week in Mannum and Murray Bridge. Key agencies and departments presented information at these meetings including Green Industries SA, SA Power Networks, and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. These events are an opportunity for flood-affected residents to learn about the recovery process, and provides another avenue for individuals to voice their questions and concerns. Both meetings were live streamed and can be replayed online. If you were unable to attend or watch you can access the recordings in the links below.

A recurring sentiment emerging from these community meetings is the eagerness to initiate the clean-up process as quickly as possible. It's important to follow some simple steps to ensure your clean-up can occur efficiently and safely. Firstly, register for clean-up assistance with Green Industries SA by calling the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787. Green Industries SA will advise you on your next steps. Please ensure your waste does not impede access for collection trucks. If trucks are unable to gain access they may be unable to pick up your waste. More information on the clean-up can be found in this newsletter.

As the River Murray returns to regular levels there are still active risks and safety should remain our first priority. SA Power Networks are calling for caution when working near power lines. Mosquito-borne diseases continue to pose a health hazard, so please continue to heed "fight the bite" messages. Your health and wellbeing is our greatest concern and we will continue to keep you informed on these issues and more in the weeks and months ahead.

As always I encourage you to contact me directly with any issues you may have. There are a lot of moving parts in a recovery effort of this magnitude, but you always remain the focus of every endeavour we make.



Alex Zimmermann

Community Recovery Coordinator

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Green Industries SA update

Green Industries SA (GISA) is strongly urging flood-affected residents to register for clean-up assistance.

To be eligible to register for GISA's clean-up assistance your property needs to have been impacted by flood water.

To register for assistance call the State Relief and Recovery Infoline on 1800 302 787. The infoline is open seven days a week from 9am to 5pm.

Registered residents eager to begin the clean-up process will have access to five free vouchers to dispose of flood-affected material at participating waste transfer stations. If you have used all five vouchers you are able to obtain more, there is no limit to the number of free vouchers you can access.

No registered resident will miss out on clean-up assistance. The clean-up is a free, taxpayer-funded service. The clean-up is a \$60 million project, and contracts and projects of this size take time to deliver, so please be patient.

GISA are prioritising permanent residents, but no one will miss out on the free service.

Areas with a greater number of registrations indicate the need for increased clean-up services. To ensure the clean-up process is as fast and as effective as possible it is essential to register so we can prioritise services and support for flood-affected communities.

Green Industries SA has created an interactive online map outlining key details on flood recovery community meetings, transfer stations accepting flood-affected material, in progress health and safety street waste clearances and recovery centres in Berri, Mannum and Murray Bridge.

Further updated public information will be posted on Green Industries SA's website as they are confirmed. For more information and to view Green Industries SA's interactive map [click here](#).

Health and safety street waste clearances

As flood-affected roads become increasingly accessible and property owners gain access to their properties, waste has started to be placed roadside. To

deal with the increased roadside waste, GISA has engaged contractors to conduct health and safety street waste clearances to avoid them becoming a health or traffic hazard.

GISA's interactive online map outlines where and when health and safety street waste clearances are occurring. Please check this map regularly to see when health and safety street waste clearances are scheduled to take place in your area.

Contractors are being coordinated to ensure roadside piles are removed in a timely manner. The challenge is that roadside piles may re-appear where collections have already occurred. In those cases another collection will be organised to ensure nobody misses out.

Residents are asked to segregate their waste into the following piles if possible:

- 1) General waste (hard waste, household items, mattresses, carpets, etc.)
- 2) Scrap metal - collected separately for recycling
- 3) Soil / Mud / Sandbags - collected separately for composting
- 4) Vegetation - collected separately for composting
- 5) Hazardous waste such as oils, fuel, garden chemicals, paints - collected separately and taken to a licenced hazard waste depot

Do not place any asbestos or asbestos containing material roadside. If you are concerned you may have asbestos on your property, please register for a free assessment and GISA will organise for the asbestos to be safely removed for free. Free asbestos removal is still going to be some weeks away, please be patient.

Property assessments

Property assessments for registered residents will start as soon as it's safe to do so. That will be after water levels recede in the next few weeks and access via roads is restored. An approved South Australian Government contractor will contact you as soon as possible about the next steps to gain access to your property to conduct a structural assessment and organise the necessary clean-up services. You will be given a copy of the assessment that you can then choose to share with your insurer, council, or any builder or contractors. The assessment will not be shared without your consent.

SA Power Networks update

SA Power Networks (SAPN) is restoring power to customers along the River Murray within about two days of receiving notification they are safe and ready for reconnection. As of yesterday morning SAPN has restored power to 589 properties.

Paul Roberts, Head of SAPN Corporate Affairs said customers who are ready should request reconnection via their energy retailer.

“For a customer impacted along the river, SA Power Networks currently is averaging reconnection at around two days following receipt of a request from their retailer,” he said.

“We had expected a rush of requests for reconnection but now believe there will be a steady flow of requests as customers visit their properties and start the challenging task of cleaning up.

“In many properties power reconnection will need to follow on from repairs and other building works.

“However, as the clean-up progresses, and more roads become accessible, additional resources are being deployed to river areas to assist local crews in tackling the reconnection work.”

Mr Roberts said waters on floodplains were continuing to recede. While major roads were opening up access to many areas remains a significant issue due to damage to local roads.

SAPN has also highlighted the potentially fatal risk associated with contacting or getting too close to electrical infrastructure during the clean-up.

“In these situations, electrical risks are not always top of mind, but the reality is we have re-energised the network along the river and touching or getting too close to powerlines could be potentially fatal,” he said.

“We urge property owners to engage a qualified electrician to undertake a safety check of all electrical wiring and carry out any repair works that are needed. It is illegal to do this work yourself and may put others in danger,” he said.

“People operating large vehicles and machinery and undertaking demolition or construction work need to be mindful of the proximity of powerlines.”

“Our concern is there will be pressure for work to be done quickly and that it may potentially be undertaken by inexperienced operators.”

“We advise property owners that they should take every precaution in visiting their properties and that they do not interfere with electrical infrastructure of any kind until we have visited and they have received confirmation that it is safe either from us or their electrician.”

Concerns include coming too close to or contacting overhead powerlines while working, digging up underground powerlines and some operators moving, connecting or disconnecting electrical equipment when they are not qualified or certified and do not have confirmation the equipment is de-energised.

SAPN is continuing to undertake community information hubs for residents eager to learn more about the reconnection process. These meetings are held from 10am to 3pm:

Thursday, 16 March - Waikerie (Waikerie Library & Visitor Centre, 1A Strangman Road)

Tuesday, 21 March - Morgan (Morgan Activity Centre, 7 Third Street)

Wednesday, 22 March - Mannum (Mannum Leisure Centre, 51 Adelaide Road)

Thursday, 23 March - Murray Bridge (Local Government Centre - 2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge)

For more information about the reconnection process visit [SAPN's River Murray Flood page](#)

Flood recovery community meetings

Community Recovery Coordinator Alex Zimmermann, local councils and relevant departments and agencies are continuing their outreach into flood-affected regions by hosting a series of community meetings.

Agencies and departments that have and will continue to feature in community meetings include Green Industries SA, SA Power Networks and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Confirmed future meetings are outlined below.

Wednesday, 22 March - Milang (Marine Search and Rescue Squadron Club, Woodrow Drive, Milang) 6pm to 8pm

Future meetings are currently being organised and local communities will be informed as they are finalised. To view the most up to date community meeting schedule visit sa.gov.au/floods.



A flood recovery community meeting was held in Mannum last week.

Watch the Mannum and Murray Bridge community meetings



Preserving personal heritage

Have you had family photos or other heirlooms impacted by the floods? Have your personal mementos developed mould? It can be distressing to see something you value badly damaged.

Salvaging your personal heritage can be difficult, but with some easy steps you can improve your chances of restoration or repair. The tips and tricks outlined

below help increase the chances of saving your cherished items and ensure that they remain part of your family's history for generations to come.

Different materials require different approaches. Please follow the links provided for specific advice from relevant experts. Always ensure you put your personal safety first and use personal protective equipment if required.

Simple Steps

- Take photographs of your damaged items for insurance purposes.
- Try not to handle damaged items often.
- Create a workspace away from the affected area that is clean, dry, and well-ventilated. Cover tables/floors with absorbent material like paper towels or cotton sheets.
- Retrieve items from the affected area and carefully place them into plastic crates or boxes. Sort material into three categories: sodden, partially wet, and unaffected. Prioritize high-value, vulnerable, sodden objects.
- Gently remove excess dirt by using clean cold water.
- Air dry or freeze objects following specific instructions. Please note not all materials are suitable for freezing. Follow these links for detailed instructions on [air drying](#) and [freezing](#).
- Seek advice from a conservator if needed.

Further advice can be found via Blue Shield Australia, Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials ([AICCM](#)) and the State Library of Queensland. In South Australia, Artlab may be able to provide you with advice - contact (08) 8207 7520.

Australia also has private conservators. Private conservators can provide quotes for treatments to clean and repair damaged items, for insurance claims. Please refer to the [Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials](#) website for more information.

Support your mental wellbeing

Experiencing an event like the River Murray floods can take a toll on your mental wellbeing.

Coping during this time will look a little different for everyone, but there are simple things you can do to support your own mental wellbeing.

Simple ways you can support your mental wellbeing:

- **Focused breathing**
Put a hand on your belly. Breathe in and out deeply. Repeat.
- **Stop and stretch**
Drop your shoulders and roll them a few times.
- **Take notice**
Find a place to sit and be still. Name three things you can see, hear and feel from the space around you.

Find out more about supporting mental wellbeing after the floods at wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/floods

Support is available

Reach out if you need support, there are people and services available.

For **River Murray flood recovery information**:

- Call the State Relief and Recovery Information Line: 1800 302 787
- Visit sa.gov.au/floods

Mental health support services – free, confidential and 24/7:

- Lifeline 13 11 14 (text 0477 13 11 14)
- Regional Access Program 1300 032 186
- MensLine 1300 789 978
- Find more mental health support and services at sahealth.sa.gov.au/mentalhealthservice

If you are **experiencing a mental health emergency** or suicide distress, call:

- Triple Zero **000**
- Mental Health Triage Service **13 14 65**



Hey

River Murray Communities

Take the time, look after your mind

wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/floods

 Wellbeing SA

Mid Murray Council advice on Community Wastewater Management Systems

With different types of systems (effluent drainage and sewer) operational across the Mid Murray Council area, all river property Community Wastewater Management Systems (CWMS) have been flood-affected.

Council removed CWMS treatment plant pumps and electrical equipment prior to the flood event and works have commenced on recommissioning all schemes.

In order to prevent damage to private and public infrastructure it is best practice to turn off the power supply to any septic pump/grinder pump to prevent damage for when SA Power Networks reconnects the electrical supply to the property.

An assessment of septic tanks in the Blanchetown shack area is being undertaken to assess whether quantities of silt have been deposited in the septic tank. This assessment will determine the amount of silt infiltration to the system, if any, and if deemed by council that desludging of tanks is required, this process will then be rolled out across the District.

A proactive program of septic tank pump outs is scheduled for CWMS sewer systems (on property grinder pump type) to prevent any potential damage to pumps. In preparation, and where practical, it will assist council if septic tank lids of these systems are exposed to enable ease of location.

This does not assess any silt in the pipes, gully traps or other inlets. A plumber will need to be engaged by the property owner to assess, predominantly where grinder pump systems are in place.

For property owners wishing to remove material from their own systems or for those with stand-alone systems, septic tanks may need to be pumped by a licenced contractor and cleaned to remove excess silt. Tanks should not be pumped out by property owners, as EPA requirements are to be complied with and may create additional concerns.

Boat ramps and reserves reopen in Murray Bridge

Boat ramps at three popular Murray Bridge and Wellington riverfront reserves reopened in time in for the long weekend.

Launching facilities at Sturt Reserve, Long Island Reserve and Baker Reserve reopened at noon on Friday. Long Island and Baker Reserves also reopened, while access to the majority of Sturt Reserve was restored last month.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge Chief Executive Officer Michael Sedgman said it was important boating enthusiasts remained aware of lingering dangers on the River Murray.

“Although water levels are now at pool level, the water remains fast flowing and many hidden dangers washed downstream still lurk below the surface of the water, changing the traditional landscape of the river,” he said.

“It’s important to be aware of these dangers and exercise caution on the water at all times.”

As more roads and reserves reopen during the flood recovery period, a full list of council services and facilities impacted is available on [The Rural City of Murray Bridge website](#) and updates will be posted to the [council's Facebook page](#).

Road re-openings continue

The flood-affected sections of Morgan Road, Barmera and Burdett Road, Cowirra re-opened to all traffic last week.

Morgan Road, between Arnold Coats Road and Queen Elizabeth Drive, re-opened to all traffic with a 60km/h speed restriction in place from Tuesday, 7 March, after water receded to a safe level and the temporary levee along the road was removed by Berri Barmera Council.

Bridge and road pavement assessments for Morgan Road have been completed, with some identified minor pavement repairs having been completed by Berri Barmera Council, along with debris clean up works.

Berri Barmera Council will continue with the remaining levee removal and road repair works under traffic management over the next two weeks. Speed restrictions will be lifted upon completion of these works.

Burdett Road, between Cowirra Swamp Road and Hunter Road, will also re-open to all traffic today with a 60km/h speed restriction in place at 9am, following the completion of temporary repairs.

Once Morgan and Burdett roads have re-opened, Hunter Road will be the last of the 12 State Government-managed roads to remain closed.

Repair works on Hunter Road are continuing and are expected to be completed later this month.

To provide Bolto and Cowirra residents access to their properties from Mannum, the Mannum upstream and downstream ferries are open to local light vehicle traffic (under 3 tonnes) and an additional passenger-only ferry service is running between Mannum and Cowirra.

Both the Mannum ferries will be restored to full service and the passenger-only ferry will stop operating once Hunter Road is re-opened.

Meanwhile, the Paringa Bridge on the Sturt Highway has reopened and resumed lifting operations.

Repair works on the bridge have been undertaken in recent weeks to ensure the ongoing structural integrity and longevity of the bridge. The lifting-span function has been cleared to resume operations following service works, while repairs on the bridge beams are also progressing.

Minor works will be carried out until 7pm on Thursday, 16 March 2023. During these works the Sturt Highway over the Paringa Bridge will remain open with

traffic reduced to one lane. These works will not impact the lifting of the bridge.

For more information visit the [Department for Infrastructure and Transport's website](#).

River Murray flood primary producer recovery grants

Primary producers that have suffered direct loss or damage as a result of the River Murray flood event can access recovery grants.

Grants are available for individual primary production businesses to assist with costs for clean-up and recovery and will cover expenditure incurred on or after 15 November 2022.

For more information on the River Murray flood primary producer recovery grants and to apply [click here](#).

Visit sa.gov.au/floods for more information on grants, relief packages and support available to help people and businesses affected by the flooding.

Dewatering guide

Local government authorities and flood-affected residents are encouraged to read a new fact sheet outlining how to plan for and undertake dewatering as flood waters continue to recede.

The sheet is published by the Engineering Functional Support Group in consultation with the EPA, Department for Environment and Water and the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board.

Guidance is provided on various topics including choosing the right pump, setting up your pump and safe pump operation.

For more information and to access the fact sheet [click here](#).

Environmental impact research on the flood

Scientists have launched a series of research projects to determine how River Murray environments are responding to the River Murray flood event.

The Department for Environment and Water is working with the Goyder Institute for Water Research and its partners to fill knowledge gaps to inform the future management of riverine, floodplain and wetland habitats.

Researchers will capture data while high flows continue to exit the Murray Mouth to better understand environmental responses to the flood. This is in addition to the work being undertaken to further enhance river monitoring and flood forecasting.

Outcomes of the research will improve understanding of environmental responses to a wider range of flow conditions, which in turn will inform future environmental water management, including improved forecasting of river conditions, monitoring and environmental watering priorities.

For more information [click here](#).

DEW's levee assessment and remediation process

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is currently undertaking assessments of all government owned levees to determine the extent of damages and investigate safe access methods for stabilisation works.

DEW has updated their website's River Murray floods: FAQs page outlining their levee assessment and stabilisation process.

For more information and to view the FAQ page [click here](#).

Update from SA Water

SA Water has provided an information sheet outlining key details on River Murray locks and weirs, water quality, Mannum sewer restoration and private water tanks. For more information visit the link below.

[SA Water River Murray flood response information sheet](#)

Mid Murray Council's river update

The latest Mid Murray Council High River Update information sheet is now available. This outlines the council's assessment and recovery work timetable and other important information.

[High River Update - Recovery - 10 March 2023](#)

[See previous editions](#)

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Rise Up for our River



The South Australian Tourism Commission has released their Rise Up for our River campaign.

Triple M's River Murray reach-out



Triple M's Mark Ricciuto and Chris Dittmar visited the Overland Corner Hotel last week as part of "Roo's Riverland Road Trip". Image: Triple M



Triple M's Rush Hour trio Bernie Vince, Greg Blewett and Andrew Jarman broadcasted live from the Blanchetown Hotel last week. Image: Triple M

Donate to the State Emergency Relief Fund

The State Emergency Relief Fund has been created to collect and distribute financial donations to help South Australians impacted by the River Murray floods. Donations can be made via credit card, bank transfer or at your local Commonwealth Bank branch.

For more information about the relief fund and to donate [click here](#).

Assist with the recovery effort

Volunteering SA&NT is taking registrations from people interested in helping River Murray communities recover from flooding.

Volunteer opportunities may include clean-up efforts, transport, administration tasks, building and environment restoration and supporting community organisations.

[Register now](#)

Keep informed

Recovery can be complicated so we're frequently updating our websites to ensure you remain up to date.

Visit sa.gov.au/floods for information on the River Murray flood recovery. You can also view details of upcoming community meetings, subscribe to this newsletter and view previous editions.

Tell us what you think

Please use the link below to let us know what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters.

[Provide your feedback](#)

Missed a newsletter?

Missed a previous edition of the recovery newsletter? Catch up on all the recovery news.

Please share this newsletter with anyone interested in the River Murray flood recovery.

[See previous editions](#)



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